DIVISION OF FORESTRY

NEWSLETTER

STATE DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Ed Miller

1950-?

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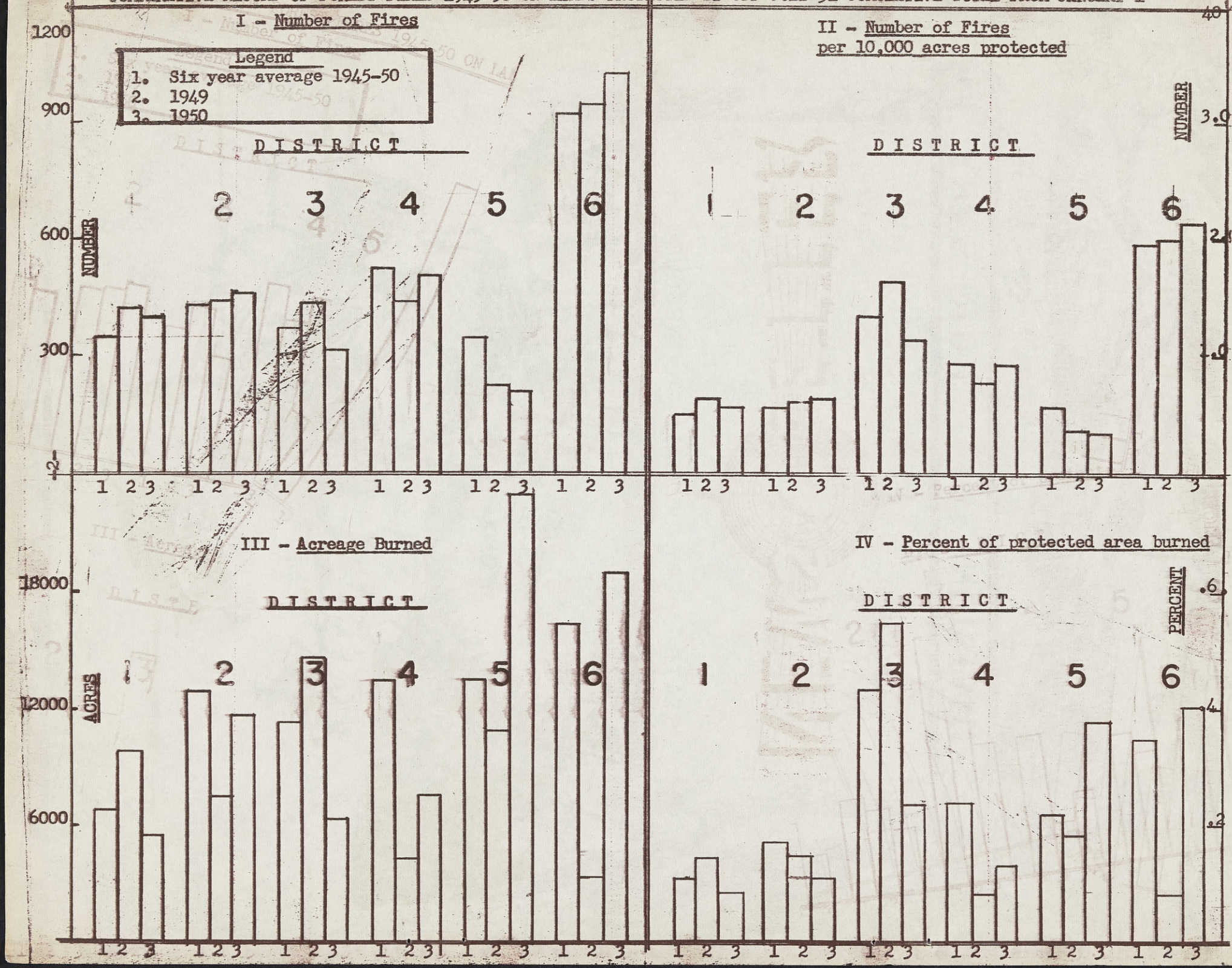
COMPARATIVE RECORD OF FOREST FIRES 1945-50 ON LANDS PROTECTED BY CDF JULY 31 CUMULATIVE TOTAL FROM JANUARY 1



I - Number of Fires

	Av. 1945 1950	1949	1950
State	2,929	2,884	2,931
District I	355	421	403
II	424	434	468
III	360	433	306
IV	524	436	513
V	334	218	215
VI	932	942	1,026

II - Number of Fires Per 10,000 Acres Protected

	Av. 1945 1950	1949	1950
State	.88	.86	.88
District I	.52	.62	.59
II	.55	.56	.61
III	1.37	1.65	1.17
IV	.95	.79	.93
V	.55	.36	.35
VI	1.97	1.99	2.17

III - Acreage Burned

State	74,279	49,699	72,089
District I	6,789	9,714	5,231
II	13,071	7,417	11,475
III	11,370	14,475	6,095
IV	13,345	4,122	7,300
V	13,416	10.711	22,983
VI	16,288	3,260	19,005

IV - Percent of Protected Area Burned

State	.22	.15	.22
District I	.10	.14	.08
II	.17	.10	.15
III	.43	.55	.23
IV	.24	.07	.13
V	.22	.18	.38
VI	.34	.07	.40

This is Vol. 9 No. 7

JULY HIGHLIGHTS

Severe burning conditions occasioned by high temperatures and low humidities during the latter part of June carried over into July in most parts of the State. Because of these weather conditions and the extremely low content of moisture in vegetative fuels, fire incidence continued high. Division of Forestry fire suppression crews worked round the clock to keep abreast of fire business. Strong initial attack confined the majority of fires to small acreage. During the first fifteen days of the month the Division attacked and controlled five hundred nineteen fires, only ten of which burned in excess of five hundred acres. Two of these fires reached major size before being placed under control.

A fire starting on June 29 on the eastern slope of San Gorgonio Mountain in San Bernardino County raced over 12,500 acres before being snuffed out by rain on July 22nd. This was a joint U.S. Forest Service and Division of Forestry fire and both agencies were severely hampered in control efforts due to the steep, inaccessible terrain of the area. It was impossible to use heavy equipment and tankers on this fire, the majority of work being accomplished by hand labor.

Faced with difficult control operations, the Division in cooperation with local utility companies, endeavored to produce rain artificially thru chemical seeding of rain clouds. On the second day of these cloud seeding operations rain fell in enough quantity to drown out the fire. Whether or not cloud seeding efforts caused rain to fall is a matter of conjecture for the U.S. Weather Bureau concluded that rain would have fallen without any attempts to artificially produce moisture. In either case, however, it was indeed fortunate that the rain did fall since many thousands of additional acres would have undoubtedly been burned over.

San Luis Obispo County also suffered heavy losses during this period. Both the U.S. Forest Service and this Division experienced a heavy run of fires several of which, because of burning conditions, escaped initial attack effort and reached major size. All available sources of supplemental manpower were taxed in this region with both the U.S. Forest Service and this Division requiring aid. On lands protected by the Division some 25,000 acres were burned over by four fires that finally burned together and were controlled as one fire. Four men lost their lives in this area when trapped between two fires.

During the latter part of the month fires in Shasta, Siskiyou, and Sonoma Counties destroyed an additional 9000 acres of forest and watershed land. Preliminary statistics indicate that on land protected by the Division more than 60,000 acres were burned over during July. With the exception of 1947 when 63,500 acres were scorched, this is the largest July loss in the last six years. The potentially dangerous fire season anticipated earlier became a reality this month and it is well to emphasize again that unless weather conditions change the August and September period are going to be unusually critical.

Recognizing this fact the Division, thru its state-wide and local programs, continued to emphasize fire prevention efforts. In many areas full use of law enforcement procedures were emphasized to gain full compliance with fire prevention laws. Local industries, organizations, and groups were apprised of the situation and asked to use their influence to gain more careful use of fire. Work in the reduction of physical hazards was of necessity somewhat

relaxed during the month for most personnel were extremely busy on going wild fires. Where the fire load was light, however, this work continued unchecked.

The team of technicians from the Division of Communications and this Division continued its job of modifying Division radio equipment called for by the Federal Communications Commission months ago. By August 4 the technicians will have completed modification work in all administrative districts except One and Five. It is hoped that all radio equipment will be converted in these districts by the October 1 deadline established by the Federal Communications Commission.

Two four-wheel driven Coleman Ford trucks were in the fabrication stage at the Yankee Motor Body Corporation this month with an anticipated delivery date of August 31. Three pickup pumpers being constructed by the Van Pelt Company will be completed by August 4. This company also worked during the month on the construction of one crew truck and one fire truck which, after preliminary approval by Division personnel, will be used as models for the construction of thirty-five crew trucks and fifteen fire trucks. Seven D-7 Caterpillar tractors were delivered to the Division by the Caterpillar Tractor Company. Two G.M.C. diesel transports with Foster tilt bed trailers have also been received. The Division anticipates the delivery of two White diesel transports within the next ten days.

After overcoming site problems, material shortages, labor difficulties, and adverse winter weather conditions, seven of the eight approved C.D.C. camps have now been completed and are occupied. Engineers are once again surveying a site for the eighth camp in Placer County.

A number of range improvement control burns were conducted this month in Districts I, III, and IV. With but few exceptions all burns have so far been confined successfully to their predetermined control lines. Present indications are that ranchers conducting these burns are seriously concerned this year with the escape fire problem. To date they have directed greater attention to adequate control lines and sufficient manpowerand equipment to preclude the possibility of fires escaping. Greatest activity in this field will come in August and September when a large number of burns are scheduled.

Under the State Nursery program, the Division of Forestry distributed more than 97,000 trees during the fiscal year 1949-50. The bulk of these trees were sold to the general public for purposes of soil erosion control, farm windbreaks, farm woodlots, stock shelters, and for public planting along streets and roadsides. This is a 45% increase over distribution during the previous year.

The total number of timber operators now having registered under the Forest Practice Act totals 844. This year's registration already passes that of last year when a total of 813 timber operators were recorded.

Forest practice inspection work continues in all districts. An example of the work load entailed in this program is indicated by the figure for our North Coast District in this district to date. Division employees have accomplished 509 sawmill inspections and 261 logging inspections.

The Board of Forestry at its July 13 meeting in Visalia asked by resolution the State Lands Commission to proceed with the proposed exchange of scattered pieces of State School Lands for various parcels of National Forest land lying in the vicinity of Mountain Home State Forest in Tulare

County. This problem has been under consideration for the last two years.

LET'S LAUGH

Bits from subpurchase orders (NR40) and other documents received in the Sacramento Office.

"Labor - Remove head - check for cracks and install owner's head."

"These shoes necessary to replace worn shoes and shoes that lining was coming off from."

"I carried Mr. H. from Fillmore to Visalia." - - Forestry's Strong Man.

WE WONDER

"Generator arm went out and battery went dead, radio went dead, car went dead." What became of the driver?

Name of a recent fire "DAM" - Was he only expressing his feelings?

One station buys milk, etc. from a DIARY. Are there any secrets in the curd?

Another buys food at a Gorcery.

ABOUT THE DIVISION

NEVADA COUNTY

Nevada County had its fourth of July celebration too, along with many other communities in the State and as per usual we had an entry in the parade, but just as our entry (fire truck plus decorations) got about two thirds of the way through the parade it received a call to go on a fire (another advantage of radio in a fire truck). His get away was assisted by several hundred spectators and for awhile the people thought it was part of the show, but when the truck didn't come back right away I guess they realized it was the real thing. What could be better publicity than that.

For some of the Nevada City CDF men the last 3 days were spent in search of a missing boy in the wilds of Deer Creek. The boy, the son of Bill Price retired Forest Service Official, was found several miles from where he was supposed to be lost suffering only from exposure and exhaustion, but OK otherwise. Searching for missing persons is a far cry from firefighting but stranger jobs than that have developed lately.

Spring? No it can't be that; but something is definitely causing all these fires out at Lake Vera adjacent to the Girl Scout Camp. So far we have had 3 this week. It looks like a case for the Ranger to investigate.

D. E. Knowlton
State Forest Ranger

In Nevada County the fire situation has been picking up recently as small fires of all caliber have started to play a large part in the life of our personnel. For example, we had on the third of July a small burn of 320 acres go up in smoke on the lower end of the county. On the fourth of July a small fire on the U.S.F.S. required the services of the CDF to help control the situation.

Although we have been consistently interrupted, we have not been idle as to Fire Prevention activities. As undoubtedly some of you know, at Lake Vera each summer there is a continuous congregation of Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls from Oakland, Sacramento, and neighboring communities; to which at successive intervals we are giving Fire Prevention talks and showing movies.

Getting back to fire control, we have developed a new technique as to the ideal fire and its suppression conditions. The title of our little gem as discussed in this article will be "The Tahoe Navy." Its amazing development occurred on the eleventh of July. A crew was sent to Scott's Flat Reservoir to check a fire reported to be on the bank of the reservoir. As it was on the cooperative boundary with the U.S.F.S. they dispatched a crew also. Neither crew found the fire; but later another CDF crew led by Bob Green, FFTD and supervised by Ranger Don Knowlton and Associate Ranger Jim Hayes returned to the scene. After discovering that the fire was on the other side of the reservoir, the crew commandeered a boat, crossed to the fire and presently returned with a full report on such ideal conditions. Of course you know what branch of the service our personnel will be in if the Korean situation continues.

As the fire season is now in progress, we think it appropriate that a representative voice of a member of our community be included in this publication:

JUST WONDERIN'

I wonder about forest trees
And at this time of year,
My thoughts of them are slightly tinged
With something I call fear.

Summer, a long dry summer, has relinquished her reign and Autumn has taken over the forests which are dry and sere and the fire hazard is great. Soon, however, the hunters will be thronging the forest paths, building their camp fires by limpid mountain streams and, of course, after a day of tracking the antlered deer they will be relaxing, eating the evening meal and smoking the festive cigarette.

Lumbermen, foresters, and experienced hunters know and observe the rules which govern their conduct during the hunting season, but there are the rank amateurs and the careless ones, who seemingly take no thought for the morrow or anything else. They literally have no time to bank fires, or to look well to the ways of their lighted matches and their cigarettes.

Costly forest fires follow in their wake and seldom do they stop to consider the fact that their negligence has caused any of the annual disasters.

The true hunter acts to protect our forest areas, because he enjoys coming to his favorite resorts year after year and so desires the salvation of the forests and the wildlife they shelter. The lumberman shudders at the number of homes which wanton waste make impossible of construction. The forester knows the danger of forest fires not only to the trees and wildlife but to the lives of men who must go forth to battle the fire demon which someones heedless hand has unleashed.

It is asserted that nine out of every ten fires are man-made -- man made? What of the girls and women who are perhaps more careless with their cigarettes and matches than their more experienced brothers?

With the approach of hunting season, signs will be posted, warnings will be issued, many precautions taken. Still to those of us who love our forests, to those of us who are grieved by the yearly loss, and to those of us whose homes are in forested areas, comes the haunting fear of fire.

Let us all take extra precautions against the raging demon of destruction this season and let us warn others to take similar precautions. It would be cause for deep regret to come happily into the inviting forests, enjoy the rustling shade, the spicy odors and the sports of which some of us are so fond and then leave behind us a smoking ruin of that which we had found serenely beautiful. Let us make sure that no heedless act of ours will kill the green forests and destroy the helpless animals sheltered therein.

The rules of the forest are simple,
It were wanton indeed to forget;
Quench your fires, crush the lingering
sparks
From the stub of your cigarette.
by Adeline Merriam Conner

Larry Monian, Dispatcher

FROM DISTRICT III

District III extends their sincere sympathy to Jerry and Doris Reinecker (nee Bennetts) in the loss of their year old daughter.

AMADOR COUNTY

Since our last article in the News Letter we have managed to bring our routine more near to normal. Our construction of the garage and store room at Dew Drop Station and the Ranger's residence and garage at Sutter Hill has been

completed thanks to the willingness and cooperation of all personnel. Both the garage and Ranger's residence are now in use. Landscaping of both projects is under way and for the most part the heavy work is completed. The rest will be easy as we have reached the stage where our work shows results.

We are almost finished with a very ambitious roadside and general hazard reduction program. We have been able to burn many more miles of roadside this year than last year due to the help of the large CYA crews at Pine Grove CYA Camp. Much of the burning was done at nite which calls for a lot of cooperation from everyone. We will probably never be able to measure the effectiveness of our efforts but at least we have arrived at the scene of several roadside fires to find them burning up and down the road inside a disced or hoed line. This happened before all strips between the road and the lines were finally burned out. From this we know that it pays off more than one might suspect. So far we have had a comparable light fire season but we don't know what is coming up.

G. O. Phibbs
State Forest Ranger

DISTRICT IV

Again this year the Division of Forestry participated in the Fresno State College Conservation-Use Workshop. This group--comprising school teachers and administrators from all sections of California, Illinois, and Iowa--is given a very extensive field course in all phases of conservation by the members of public and private agencies dealing with each resource. The Division of Forestry presented a picture of the organization of the Division, the state policies on range improvement, forest practice, and fire prevention, and fire detection and control equipment was demonstrated. To cover the above the Division cooperated with the USFS, USNPS and UC in conducting four days of field trips.

Dean F. Schlobohm
Forest Technician

KINGS COUNTY

August 9 a spectacular fire occurred on the property of Art Nell, Oil Company, located in Kettleman Hills. An oil well and swabbing equipment truck was involved. Cause: oil fell on hot exhaust of truck during swabbing operations, several barrels of oil ignited causing fire to spread all over the place. Gang working on swabbing operations fled with something like ATOMIC speed to safety on top of a nearby hill. We have no quarrel with good judgment such as this, however. After the real danger was over it was comical to watch the foreman of the gang waving closed fisted arms and calling names several degrees warmer than said fire. (ALL THE KINGS HORSES AND ALL THE KINGS MEN COULD NOT BRING THAT GANG DOWN AGAIN, NOT UNTIL THE FIRE WAS PRACTICALLY OUT THAT IS.) Seriously, this could have been a large fire considering a $150,000 well was involved, damage to well totalled $2500, While damage to oil swabbing truck and equipment totalled $25,000. Five Kings' County trucks and one oil company truck took action on fire. This is the second oil fire this season, the other being a compressor plant also located in Kettleman Hills, property of Kettleman North Dome. Fortunately damage in both cases was small compared to property involved.

Hay fires are just about over for this season. We are happy to report a decrease in number of fires in this category. Grain harvest is over. Acreage in this county totalled approximately 150,000 acres, of that amount 55 acres burned. Fire occurred on westside of Kings County on June 6, election day, and the worst wind experienced the entire year - one could hardly distinguish dust from smoke.

Responsibility in Kings County, continues to increase with a new oil well discovered near Hanford with a possibility of opening a sizable field. Also, a new cotton compress located at the edge of Hanford on the Southern Pacific Railroad will be in operation for the cotton season this year.

The 1950-51 budget passed - money from last year was retained for construction of Hall's Corner and Corcoran Stations, also $1500 was allowed for turnout suits for active volunteers. One new truck will be purchased.

QUESTION: Would a block in the left-hand lower corner of Form FPE-1 be of particular benefit for the purpose of recording agricultural crop fires, hay, cotton etc., which do not consist of acreage? The revised form just about covers everything and is much easier to make, having a place for vehicles and improvements.

C. E. Lindley
Associate State Forest Ranger

FRESNO COUNTY

The month of July, aside from the usual fireworks heard at this time of year, started off with a bang. Speaking of the Las Pilitas fire in San Luis Obispo County now. District IV sent overhead to the fire on the 4th of July. In this group was Assistant Ranger Collumber from Madera County, and Assistant Rangers Keast and Ballard from Fresno County. Also Foremen Davis and Sommerfelt from Fresno County.

On the 6th all the crews in the Coalinga district were dispatched to the fire which by this time was of major size and growing larger all the time due to the very erratic wind conditions of that area. Tulare County sent over two crews under the leadership of Foreman Main to cover up for us in our absence. While here they had two fires, both quickly controlled with very little if any loss.

On Sunday July 9th all Coalinga personnel returned to their stations. Since that time the oft heard remark "I wish something would happen" hasn't been heard. The regular routine has been resumed and everyone concerned seems content to have it that way.

Under the direction of Foreman King McCall we have carried out a very successful training program on line construction and location and fire behavior, using a sand pile to simulate mountains, ridges and valleys. It works very satisfactory as a substitute for the real thing, the interest of the crew is held and much is learned if the type of questions asked is any indication.

Richard G. Ballard
Assistant Ranger

DISTRICT VI HEADQUARTERS

Betty Mazzola is the new Personnel Clerk at District VI Headquarters; Louise Fitzgerald having left our employ to return to "You should pardon the expression" - Florida. Minerva Roberts has taken Betty's former position in Finance.

District VI Headquarters' staff was somewhat short-handed during the month of July and early August; both Neil Rice and Jack Burke having spent two weeks in training camps - Neil with the Army and Jack with the Marines.

NEWS FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Ranger Ed Miller, now recovering from a recent illness, has sent this message for publication in the News Letter:

"I wish to take this opportunity to thank my friends in the Division of Forestry who sent me messages of cheer during my recent illness.

"Your thoughtfulness and consideration is greatly appreciated and I'm sure your cheery messages and cards helped speed me on the road to recovery. Again thank you."

Sincerely,
ED MILLER
State Forest Ranger
San Diego County "

During the illness of Ranger Miller, Ranger James Fenlon is pinch-hitting in the capacity of Ranger. It is sincerely hoped that Ranger Miller will be up and around and back on the job before long.

Assistant Ranger "Lefty" Green from Riverside was transferred to San Diego on July 1, 1950. Having worked before in San Diego County, Lefty was welcomed back by all his friends down here.

James G. Fenlon
State Forest Ranger

NEWS FROM SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

The Yucaipa District has had three major brush fires so far this month. The first fire was caused by a lightning strike in the North Fork of Whitewater Canyon. This fire started on U.S. Forest Service lands June 30, 1950, and burned onto State lands July 1, 1950, after burning 12,000 acres in the roughest, most inaccessible area in San Bernardino County. It was brought under control July 5, 1950.

The second fire started July 4 in a grain field on the Jackson Ranch. 800 acres of brush were burned on the Yucaipa Ridge. This area is a vital water-shed for the Yucaipa Valley. The cause of this fire was a faulty spark arrestor on the tractor that was used to pull a combine harvester.

Also, on the 4th of July, a 500 acre brush fire was started in Redlands City, burning through the Sunset Drive District. This fire was handled by the

units of the Redlands City Fire Department and Riverside County units. All San Bernardino County units were engaged in suppressing the Jackson Ranch Fire and Whitewater Fire.

W. W. Skinner
State Forest Ranger

The California Division of Forestry News Letter is published monthly in Sacramento for and by Division personnel. Its pages contain current facts, problems, and events relating to forestry and to the experiences of Division personnel.

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